WIT for MONEY

OR,

POET STUTTER;

A

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Smith, Johnson, and *Poet Stutter.*

Containing Reflections on some late Plays; and particularly, on *Love for Money,* or, *The Boarding-School.*

Collated & Perfect J.S.K. 1798

First Edition

——Good Satyr's no Abuse——

Mr. *Dursey*—Epil. to *Love for Money.*

Witnesses now us'd like a common Slave,
Both by those that have none, as well as those that have.

Tho. Dursey, Gent. Epil. to *Trick for Trick.*

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TO

Mr. Th. Durfey

Sir *CRITICK CATCALL* sends Greeting.

YOU have shown your self so Penitent after the Poetical Correction you received from me, that to retaliate (tho late) the Honour you did me in chusing me for your Patron, I return you Epistle for Epistle, and make you the Patron of the following Dialogue. It restects on a certain Namesake and Country man of yours, and some Plays of his lately Launch'd out; but that's all one, since it may turn to as good an account to you as some of yours, and your own practise of sacrificing your friends, to your own, and the Towns Jests, justifies it.

Indeed, I must confess, 'tis a sad Age we live in, since the applause of the Town, from Exalted Box, to more Exalted upper Gallery, the rowting the Jacobites, stilling the Criticks, and drowning their Hisses, by the loud repeated Claps of the lusty fisted Champions of your Party, able to have drown'd those of Thunder it self, and all the Kitts and Fiddles of your Antagonists of the nimble Craft; I say, 'tis a sad Age seriously, since all this cannot secure a man from censure, or a Play from being taken to pieces, which altogether made so pretty a figure: 'tis as uncharitable as the exposing the false Hair, Tooth, Calves, Eyes, and Eye-brows, &c. of our antiquated Beaux *and Ladies.*

Such is the malice of some prying envious Persons, not having the fear of Satyrists before their Eyes, that they most feloniously, barbarously, and wickedly, like Rival Women, search for, nay, make and

find faults in others, as industriously as they seek to hide their own. But what shall I say to it? Alas! 'tis the general custom of you Authors, (the more's the pity) like Mastives you bark at, claw and worry one another, whilst others cry hollow, and heartily laugh at you for your pains. Other Societies protect and shoulder one another, but you, like so many Game Cocks turn'd loose together, fall foul of the next you meet: Or to speak more Poetically, like Cadmus's Soldiers, cut and slash your fellows without mercy. Is there no means to stop this fury? From the Cobler that mends your Shooes, to the rich Goldsmith that keeps your Cash, there are Halls for their Corporations in London; 'tis pitty yours in Beotia is not removed a little nearer, or that your Master Apollo doth not send from Parnassus some Deputy to govern you here, that being once united, as much as you are divided, the Trade (for by your leave, 'tis now a Trade as much as those I Nam'd) may flourish, and the Proverb be a Lyar, which bars Poets from becoming Aldermen. This would be very necessary at present that the Indisposition of the Laurell is like to spill as much Blood as Ink among you; for from the Modern Play-writers, to the high toppers of the Profession, I expect to find you all at Daggers drawing; should he be so civil to you to leave us in haste (I hope he will not) to make a visit to his Brothers Tarrance, and Ben Johnson, in the Elizian Fields.

The Author of this Mushroom hopes all this will attone for his presumption; he desired me to recommend it to you to have it made into a Play, and hopes you may prove as prevailing a Patron, as your Party was to get yours a Name, and a third day, and hinder it from sinking under the weight of those who did not like it: some of whom were something saucy, and us'd these words out of a Play of a certain Poet, who before the Poll Act, used to write himself T. D. Gentleman: That, should we not sometimes dive into the secrets of Wit, and reprove mistakes, these Paltrily Poets would grow Insolent; we should be perpetually tormented with Lampoons. It was hard in them to reverse the saying upon its Author, tho among st Authors, 'tis no more than the reflections of Lawyers against one another at the Bar. It helps to make you famous, and I am much mistaken, if some of you would not be as thankful for a severe Criticism in Print, as for a Copy of Verses in praise of your Works.

Had my Author attack'd your friend in his worst Plays, he could have

have had a cheaper Victory, and the other a greater Overthrow; but he has done as those Generals who slight little work round to sit down before the Capital City; which may please the Party succour'd, as much as it would the Governour of the Town to see it attack'd on the strongest side. I need not then Apologize to any of the Fraternity for my friends Observations on that score, but rather to the Town, for telling them 'tis dark at Midnight, that crack'd Skulls are not sound, and that some Writers Upper-rooms are unfurnish'd. This undigested product of a few spare hours, is as needless to some Criticks, as a Treatise of the bulk of the Book of Martyrs, to prove that Mævius was a bad Poet, or a Lecture of War to a great Commander. But tho they do not want to inform their Judgments, they may something to make them merry, when they have as little to do as my friend when he writ it; had he been Master of leisure enough to have revised it, it would have appeared in a better Dress, and have had less roughness in the Style, and perhaps more in the Satyr. The smoothness of your Pen may Redress the first, and if you think he has been too mild in the other, which I must confess was at my Request, let me know it, and you will have no cause to complain to my knowledge, this being at the best but a Rough-draught or the Sketch of his Poet. I think there is enough drawn to discover who sat for it, and tho the finishing strokes being wanting, it may well be said that the Picture is somewhat unlike; I dare say 'tis after the way of our Modern Painters, and of you Freeholders of Parnassus, in the Panegyricks of your Patrons, and consequently not for the worse, my friend having us'd yours more kindly than your Abdicated Brother Bays hath done, and made him speak a Language he hath no cause to be asham'd of, tho perhaps he himself may.

I hope the Name of Stutter will not more offend than that of Recollion, Poet Belly, Lady Stroddle, Coupee, &c. which bear your Stamp, but if you think that of Balladwright or Maggot proper, you may new Nick-name that worthy Person, my friend not designing it as a mock upon any infirmity of Speech (a thing to be pitied) but as a distinguishing mark of his Hero, who Stutters more in Sence yet than in Elocution.

The Plot he leaves to you, who have such a Collection of yours and other mens in your head, your Invention seldom coming so short of your Imagination, but that the supply of a good memory makes you

amends:

amends: He knows you can as little want the addition of Songs and Dances to adorn it, as a Scholar newly returned from the University, his Tropes and Figures, or a Girl just Ween'd from the Boarding-School her Minuet et Rigadoon.

Here I should inlarge upon your Merits, your Indefatigable Writing, in spight of all discouragements, the substance of your Wit, the Ingenuity of your Conversation, your generosity in the profuse and continual distribution of your Songs, the mildness of your Satyrs, the solidity of your Burlesque, the nicenes of your Politicks, your care in obliging both Parties with your Poems: But above all, the fluidity of your Style, and your Laborious Industry in tacking together pieces and remnants of Plots and Humours, and making them your own for the diversion of those who had never seen them, in the state of their first Creation. But all this were fitter from your own Pen, and I hope you will not be so far wanting to your self, as not to oblige us with it one day, since no other Pen yet ever dared undertake it; tho I must confess, such Salutes amongst Authors, are as unnecessary as between Men of War at Sea, 'tis but wasting Powder which may be put to a more profitable use, therefore they may better be reserv'd for the future Epistle to the Patron of this Embryo; and who knows (between you and I) but it may hook in 20 Guinea's, if you Cull your man right.

And now I think it high time to take my leave, for I perceive my Epistle is swelled to a bulk, and it only belongs to such as can Wire-draw them to the purpose, to hold us at the Door as long as they please, for in an unknown Scribbler 'tis as unmannerly as a Chamber-maids Chat, when you are impatient to be admitted into her Mistresses Bed-chamber. For my part, I generally pass them over as some do Greek *when they don't understand it, with a* Transeat Græcum est, *they being as little to the purpose as the Prologues to some of our Plays; but lest I be task'd with the fault of those, who with multiplicity of words blame others overtalk, I have done, and according to the form of Letters, rest*

Your most Humble and

Obliged Servant,

Critick Catcall.

Wit for Money:

OR,

Poet STUTTER.

A

DIALOGUE.

Smith, Johnson, and *Poet Stutter.*

Smith. PRithee, *Frank*, give me leave to retire, I have a mind to Read this Afternoon.

Johnson. Indeed, *Jack*, you shall read men then——I wanted company and came to look for you, or any honest fellow, to spend it comfortably.

Smith. A good design, but hard to be compass'd, my friend, this Season, when the best part of both Sexes having taken the Field, a Man of Sense, or a Woman of Fashion, are as hard to be met here, as a Souldier in time of Action, or a Country Attorney out of Term time.

Johnson. But yet I hope the Spring hath not swept the Town so clean of good Company, but the Gleanings may serve you and I that are sharp set.

Smith. Faith, that's to be doubted of, except like Platonicks, the pleasures of the Mind make the whole Feast; for at this pre-

ſent hour I cannot tell what may make up the Regalio—therefore I muſt center my Happineſs in my Cloſet.

Johnſon. What think you of a Bottle—for I'm reſolv'd not to part with you.

Smith. As I think of Company, that which is good is hard to be met with, for I had rather ſit with half a ſcore Shop-keepers ſmoaking and talking of Trade; or as many Country Petty foggers putting of Caſes, than be condemn'd to drink my Bottle of moſt of the Stum'd mixtures which your Blue-Apron'd Retailers ſell us ſo dear—beſides two as they ſay's no company.

Johnſon. Let's to the Coffee-Houſe then, we may meet a third man, or hear the News.

Smith. That is to ſay, Lyes in abundance; be plagu'd with the fooliſh Reflections and Inferences, which Grave Block-heads make about this or that; hear them take a Town, or relieve it in their Cockle-brains; or deſcant two hours upon the Wagers, have been won or loſt lately about *Mons*: Or what's worſe, by Herding among them, be taken for one of our (wou'd be) Politicians; that Medley of Folly, Lazineſs and Knavery, who are continually in a ferment.

Johnſon. Ay, thoſe whoſe Pregnant Heads ſeem like the Mountains, ſo very big of great Notions, when after the pangs they and their fooliſh Hearers labour under, a poor ſilly Mouſe is the Delivery.

Smith. No, I had rather ſit out a whole long dull Tragedy, or a ſecond part of the Three Dukes of *Dunſtable*.

Johnſon. And that were a torment not to be endured—but now you talk of Plays, what thing you of going there now?

Smith. They do not Act to day; beſides if they did, 'tis odds but 'tis ſome ſilly new one doom'd to death, like a monſtrous Birth, as ſoon as it hath ſeen the light, and which, tho ſhoulder'd and propt up by a powerful party, to get the Author a third day, muſt fall of it ſelf after, to live in the Bookſellers Shop, at the mercy of the Worms, for want of other Criticks, to gnaw it.

Johnſon. I wonder thoſe fooleries dare appear in print.

Smith. Oh Sir! as long as Scribblers can find Bookſellers to buy them, and they Fools to read 'em, they need not care, what the wiſer part will ſay, they are Caſe-harden'd, and you need not

not expect them to leave Writing, till they leave dull Flattery, Whores their Jilting, Lawyers refuse bribes, or the House to act their Plays, as I believe they will for the future, lest all others, tho good, fall into disrepute; and the House be as empty at a new good Play in Winter, as it is at a bad one in the Long Vacation.

Johnson. But there are good old Plays, which like Stock-Horses, must bear the dead weight and charge of the others.

Smith. Ay, and there is need they shou'd; but the Town of late, have like true Libertines, shunn'd Faces and Plays once seen, whether good or bad, and serv'd them all alike; but there's hopes they'll Recant, and after their roving fit, they may be more constant; for to be tir'd with change, is the first step towards the settling our affections; and since when we have been but one Week in the Country, we find so much the want of the Play-House, that the very Strowlers are then welcome to us. I dare say, the Town can no more be without Plays, than a brisk young Widdow without a Husband or a Gallant.

Johnson. Let's go to the Booksellers; and see what new Books are sprung up since last Night.

Smith. With all my heart: but methinks thou mak'st Mushrooms of them: If some Reverend Author, or Waspish Satyrist heard thee, thou wou'd be in danger of a lash in his next Weeks Pamphlet.

Johnson. Authors and Satyrists do you call them? Scribblers, Libellers, and Lampooners, are more suitable Epithets for many of them; and for my part, I oftner take up their Papers to pick out their Nonsense, and laugh at it, than to find any thing worthy observation.

Smith. Oh, I have found out another use for them; formerly I cou'd not sleep, tho I desired it; but having bought a Book call'd *The Moralist*, I began to read it one Night, having no other by my Bed-side, when even Opium cou'd not purchase me sleep, and before I had read two Pages, I slept so fast, that I found the next Morning my Candle in the Socket, and the Book in the Chamber-pot.

Johnson. And a very fit place for it, and all such dull, insipid, heavy, unweildy fustian.

Smith

Smith. I am not of your mind, when it may ſave a Man Half a-Crown in Opium. I want to buy another.

Johnſon. You need not have that again, 'tis but getting the *Weeſil Trap'd*, the *Triannal Mayor*, *Collin's Walk*, *Butlers Ghoſt*; (and a very Ghoſt indeed it is) *alias*: The fourth part of *Hudibras*, and half a ſcore Plays, by the ſame Hand, *cum multis aliis*, of others, and they will have the ſame effect to a Miracle; *Experto crede Roberto.*

Smith. Why, how came you to remember what all the World hath forgot?———

Johnſon. But the Bookſellers you ſhou'd have added—for I believe there is not Ten Men in the Nation, beſides the Author, Bookſeller, Printer and Corrector, e're read them through. To tell you the truth, as Mr. *Dryden* ſacrifices a *Buſſy d' Ambois* to the memory of *Ben Johnſon*, I ſacrifice one of theſe yearly to the memory of *Shakeſpear*, *Butler*, and *Oldham*; but this is a Bookſellers—go in———

Smith. Where is the laſt *Momus Ridens*?

Johnſon. Here it is—the Author hath left off, and when the Bookſeller is as weary of Printing, as the Town of buying a Penny Lampoon, 'tis high time for the Author, after the recruit of a third day, to leave you, without taking leave, and like the Fox, to cry the Grapes are ſowre, when his *Pegaſus* a tip Toes, cannot reach at the ſweet Copy Money.

Momus Ridens N. 20. *Smith. We want but an Union to make them all Fools, reads. And bid the ſtarv'd Armies to* Baiſe nos Culs. Like the Kings of *Brentford*, the Author makes his *Momus* ſpeak *French*, but with this difference, that it does not much ſhew his breeding.

Johnſon. Oh! yes, 'tis very pretty: Why, to bid the *French* kiſs his A—ſe muſt needs be very taking. For fear they ſhould forget it, he hath bid them do it three or four times—But is not this very pretty, ſpeaking of the *French* King———

His Wars have already exhauſted ſuch Charge,
Their Gentry for Dinner ſcarce get a brown George.

Smith. As for their *Gentry* doubtleſs ſome of them are poor enough; but as for *exhauſted ſuch Charge*, I cannot tell how to make ſence of it.

Johnſon.

Johnson. Nor he, not any Man I'm sure; do you think he minds Grammar? He forgot it, or ne're learnt it at School. And as for *Exhausted such charge*, he has been at such a charge of Wit, that his stock is *Exhausted*; and that's the reason he has left off——and lets leave him off too——

Smith. Prithee who's the Author of it?

Johnson. Poet Stutter.

Smith. Then I don't wonder 'tis such——Why, he can't Write——

Johnson. What do you mean? He was Prentice to a Scriviner.

Smith. I mean, he can't write sence.

Johnson. Therefore he's the fitter to Write such things; they only seem calculated for the Meridian of the City Coffee-Houses, where sense is as great a stranger as amongst the arne bred *Teagues*, or the *Bethlemitish* Collegians: who yet sometimes will drop you a Witticism by chance. One while he rails at the Priests, another at the *French*, laughs at the *Irish*; and in the whole, banters all, and the work's done. They are all alike, from the first to the last; I would confine him to *Scotch* Songs, I mean such of them as our Gay People of both Sexes call *Scotch*, tho' they want as much the Dialect, as the sense of some of that Country.

Smith. Prithee why?

Johnson. Because, as I said, he much wanting sense, is the fitter to write them, it being an essential part of them to have none; and the more, since his faculty of Singing renders him the more capable to fit a Horse to a Saddle; that is, words to a Tune.

Smith. Oh, yes, he's not a little proud of that: I believe that in the *Elisian* Fields, he'll hardly give the Wall to *Horace*, or any of the Lyrick Poets. He contradicts his Notion of Musicians, and gives his noted *Omnibus hoc vitium* the Lye, tho no man verifies it more than himself. Indeed, he is a Tolerable Eccho, his only quality is a Voice.

Johnson. That made a Modern Wit say of him, in a late Preface, That *a Man of sense would not do Penance in his Company, without the amends of his Singing.*

Smith. I have read it——But what's here, the very book you spoke of——*The Moralist*?

Johnson. I'll buy it——I see 'tis a continuation of the Weesils, tho the Author hath left the style of *Reynard* the Fox; to whose

humour; and the malice and dangerous Notions of his first Libel, he ought, I think, to attribute its Reception with some people, as much as his Under-Brothers of the Scribbling Herd, the Sale of their Parabolizing Bears, Puppies and Magpies.

Enter Poet Stutter.

Stutter. Gentlemen, your most humble Servant.

Johnson. Oh! your Servant, Mr. *Stutter*, I was just a going to buy a piece of Poetry here, 'tis the Moralist, is it worth reading?

Smith. As much as any thing you have seen since Sir *William Davenant*'s Rational Sceptick, it overthrows all the Doctor's Vindications, and levels all the Parson's Arguments; the Hind and Panther talk'd like Parrots to this. Let me see———

There are more Notions than the case does need.

Mor. *'Tis true, much more than any one will read;*
Unless he'll sit six hours to doze and pore,
And be as wise just as he was before:
For, in opinion almost all the Nation
Agree, it ne'er was writ for confutation;
But, for the profit, as the sale begins,
To make your Court———

Johnson. Ay, Ay, Let me tell you this passage falls very heavy upon some body that shall be nameless——*aside*——his very self——*to him again*——'Tis the very quintessence of *Hobbs* and *Seneca*, and beyond *Waller* for smoothness. No scrutinous Casuist ever solv'd a knotty point more clearly, nor wheadling Town Jilt use more flowing words to her amorous Cully.

Stutter. Ay, considering the subject, I think 'tis well enough: The Now-Laureat never writ such a thing in his Life.

Johnson. No, I dare swear he never did——*aside*——Nor any one that hath a grain of Wit. The dull Coxcomb swallows flattery by whole-sale, faster than a half starv'd *Fleet-street* plyer do's Sack and Bisket.——Prithee dear Poetry who writ it?———

Stutter. An honest Moralist, I faith, that shall be nameless; you or I, for ought I know.

Johnson. Then you pretend to Morality; but how do's it agree with it, to come on a Man that hath a thousand Aggressors already, and never meddled with you; and what is more, is guilty of no other fault than you, that is, to have altered his principle——

Morality

Morality teaches us to use others, as we would be us'd our selves: What now if some one or other should stick to your skirts and expose you as much?

Stutter. I fear it little, my Emblem is the Thistle, *Nemo me impune lacesset*, 'twould do me and my books a kindness, and like the Sun after an Eclipse, I should appear the more glorious.

Johnson. A very pretty Simile, and much to the purpose, for *Phœbus* the God of Poetry, is the Sun.

Smith. Ay--but there is this difference, that the Sun has 12 Houses, but our little *Phœbus* here has not one. But my friend, how came you to write the Weesil Trap'd after the Weesils? And if I am not mistaken, the Tryennial Mayor, as well as the Moralist. Methinks their principles differ as much as a Lay-Elder and a Lawn Sleeve, or *Poet Stutter* in the two last Reigns, and *Poet Stutter* in this.

Stutter. Oh! you wrong me, I never chang'd my Religion.

Smith. That may well be, because perhaps you never had any; but for your principles, I am sure you have alter'd them more in two years, than the Taylors have the fashions since the Restauration——but that's no newer thing to some of your profession, than to a true Courtier in times of change—

Johnson. Prithee don't be too severe, but remember all Trades must live. Why should not a Writer sell to both parties his *Wit for Money*, as well as a Vintner his Claret, or a Town Woman her favours? What if a man will exalt a Weesil, and Trap him afterwards, rail at the Clergy in one place, and commend them in another, side with the Grumblers in one thing, then lash them in the next, Write Trimming Songs and Panegyricks on the City Magistrates in this Reign, and with them *Sham'd*, *Kick'd* and *Damn'd*, in the last: Blame Doctors for Writing Pro and Con, yet do it one Week after another. It doth not signify a farthing (from whence it comes,) 'tis like Musick, the different and thwarting parts set one another off. Do you think Rats and Weesils, Moralizing Atheists, dull Panegyricks, worse than Lampoons and Lampoons, more glorious to those they are meant to, than Panegyricks by those hands? Songs, Ballads, Drolls and Farces, signify a pin on either side? No, to mind those things, is the business of those that have none; and tho the Authors of those

mighty

mighty trifles ſtrut it like Turky-cocks, and think themſelves wrong'd for want of a Lawrel to *tear* their Blockheads, dignify their Nonſenſe, and hide their Ignorance; the wiſer part let them go on, and write on till as the worſt of punishments, and the beſt of rewards, for their teeming Noddles, while like *Æſop's* fly on the Camels head, they think themſelves men of mighty weight, as if they were the *Primum Mobile* of State Affairs, and every Revolution the Influence of their Verſe, tho, like Town Jilts, 'tis Money they Reſpect, and every Party may be ſerved alike, and laught at in their hearts; this I mean of our *Ambidexters* only.

Stutter. Pray Mr.--a-- ſpare your ſelf the pains to be my Advocate; on my word, tho you plead briskly, you will not deſerve a Fee at my hands; do but hear my Lord *Roſcommon*, he mitigates the matter much more.

I pity, from my Soul, unhappy Men,
Compell'd by need to proſtitute their Pen;
Who, Lawyer like, muſt either ſtarve or plead,
And follow right or wrong, where Guinea's lead.

But becauſe you are Men of Honour and Senſe, I ſhall not think an hour ill beſtow'd to argue the matter a little farther with you; this place is too publick, nor has it been without ſome ſweat I have heard you and refrain'd my ſelf: If you pleaſe, we will adjourn to the Tavern, and with a ſober Bottle renew the Argument, Wine is a Friend to the Muſes.

Johnſon. I believe ſo, and wonder why Poets are ſaid to drink of the Fountain *Hippocrene*.

Smith. Oh! Sir, 'tis to ſhew that all their thoughts muſt be clear as Chryſtal, their words flow eaſy, their deſign be natural, their matter innocent, not able to intoxicate our Reaſon as Wine, Wine you know alters men, it makes the old young, the ſad merry, the poor rich, the coward ſtout, the weak ſtrong, enlivens the face, adviſes the wiſe---and alſo makes him mad; I believe many of our Plays have been written in Claret----

Stutter. Come, let's go---and take a Doſe of it, ſince as you ſay 'tis a *Pannacea*, a cure for all Evils, and the Gentleman Usher to Mirth and Happineſs. On my word, your Notion is not amiſs (and by the way I'll not forget it) I will only give this

Sheet

Sheet to the Bookſeller, and wait on you if you'll tell me where.

Smith. Don't go, we ſhall be Tongue-kill'd with his ſtuff.

Johnſon. Prithee come, 'twill be variety for once; beſides we'll make him Sing——Let it be quickly then at the *Croſs-keys.*

Stutter. There's ſuch a noiſe there always, the Pit on my firſt day, or *Billings-gate* it ſelf, might paſs for quiet places to it.—

Smith. Nay, one of your Similes will ſerve, for I think the Play-Houſe was a *Billings-gate* then.

Johnſon. Name your Tavern then.

Stutter. Let it be the *Roſe*, I am ſure of a Glaſs of the beſt there.——

Johnſon. Agreed——you'll follow.

Stutter. Preſently.

Smith. I wonder how he ventures to the Tavern with us, ſeeing how we have uſed him already; I ſhould as ſoon have believed he would have come at a Lords Mayors Feaſt to Sing his *Joy to Great Cæſar*, or, *London's Loyalty.*

Johnſon. He is a better Courtier than you imagine, and will endeavour to make you Neuter if he cannot win you to his Party; not unlike the Jeſuites, who purchaſe all the Books are writ againſt them, that they may not be read by other people; or like thoſe, who Fee ſome Lawyers not ſo much to uſe them, as to hinder them from Pleading for their Adverſaries.

Smith. It can be no eaſy matter to reconcile me to the *Pro's* and *Cons* of ſuch Mercenary Pens, they bring the whole Body Politick of Poetry into diſgrace and contempt, like *Drawcanſir*, they ſpare neither Friend nor Foe, provided there be ſomething to be got by it; and as the Whores give Love for Money, they as meanly expoſe Wit for Money, till Punk and Scribbler grow as loath'd and common one as the other. The Law hath provided a Houſe of Correction for the one, and ſince Satyr is too mild to laſh the others, 'tis pity there is not ſome other means us'd to ſilence them, that the better Pens, and the Men of honeſter Principles, may no longer ſuffer for the faults of thoſe; and when theſe Torrents and Inundations of the ſpurious, muddy, mingled ſtuff of thoſe Dabblers, which now drowns the Town, is drain'd, Wit and Merit need not be aſham'd to appear abroad, but flow in their Natural Channel.

Johnſon. Faith thou'rt in the right.

Smith. Well, I am ſorry we have ingaged our ſelves with this fellow, it were better to hear another Rehearſal of *Bayes*, or another reading of his City Mouſe and Country Mouſe.

Johnſon. Prithee do not be diſheartned, we will have rare ſport.

Smith. It will be dear bought if you have any; it were a better bargain to hear Merry *Andrew*'s Inſipid Jokes, in hopes of a Jeſt every half hour, Court an affected ſenſeleſs Muſician for a Song, or humour an old peeviſh Relation on the proſpect of a Legacy.

Johnſon. Why, thou art more Splenatick than a Mathematician diſturbed in his Calculations, or a Poet whoſe Play hath been Damn'd before his third Day. Thou art a meer Uſurer of thy Converſation, thou wilt not lend thine without a large Intereſt of Wit. Come, *Jack*, your ſtock is large, be a little more laviſh on't, to him 'tis Charity, he lives upon the ſcraps of ſuch as you, and you need not grudge to ſee the Brats of your Brains father'd by another.

Smith. Nor thoſe of my Body, *Frank*, tho I ſhould hate to ſee them ill dreſs'd or diſtorted, and ſuch I gueſs his Education will make any ones, when the beſt fancy or plot Midwif'd by him into the World, will either be crippled, or at the beſt look like a Child half ſtarv'd at Nurſe.

Johnſon. Do you take him for ſuch an ill Taylor that he cannot dreſs any Wit as it ought to be?

Smith. Even ſo, witneſs his laying violent hands on *Shakeſpear* and *Fletcher*, whoſe Plays he hath altered ſo much for the worſe, like the Perſecutors of Old, killing their living Beauties by joining them to his dead lameleſs Deformities.

Johnſon. Oh! if there be Poetical Juſtice to be had in the *Elezian Fields*, how he'll be maul'd, and if in this World, he were ſerv'd like *Æſops* Jay, and every Bird ſhould claim their feathers, how Naked he would be.

Smith. Not ſo naked neither, he is Voluminous enough with the Leaves of his Books; like another *Adam* to cover his nakedneſs, and tho moſt of our Authors might well call their Books pickt Sentences, ſelect Lines, Collections of fine things, and Miſcellanies,

Miſcellanies of other mens thoughts, ſhould one Chymiſt like, ſeparate the different Metals of which their compound is made up, there would remain of their own a great deal of ſubſtancial, weighty, ſolid——

Johnſon. Lead, you mean.

Smith. Matter.

Johnſon. Then pray no more of that matter, we have diſcanted but too much on it already, let's talk of ſomething elſe till our Poetaſter come, you'll be ſure of a belly full of it then.

Smith. Let's talk of what you will; tho', let me tell you, I would have my friend, like an Ingenious Preacher, extract a good Doctrine out of a barren Text. But here he comes.

Stutter. Gentlemen, I hope I have made my word good; I love to be as punctual to my friends, as—

Smith. An Author to his Bookſeller, when he is to pay him his Copy Money; a paſſionate Lover to his firſt aſſignation, or a moneyleſs Paraſite to my Lords Hour of ſetting down to Dinner, or—

Stutter. The Sun to his appointed ſetting—and there I was before you. But what News do you hear, Gentlemen?—

Johnſon. They ſay the Armies——

Stutter. Oh! I did not ask about Warlike News: But News from *Wits Commonwealth.* What new Lampoon hath the Vogue? What Songs now fill the Air? What Satyr bites the Town? Or, to ſpeak more largely, What new Play puts the Criticks to their old Talent of finding fault? Or *Jacobite* like, biting their Fingers for want of power to bite others.

Johnſon. Why, *Tom*, I ſhould have expected ſuch queſtions from thee, as little as from a Court Lady what's the faſhion, a Seaman how's the Wind, or a Watchman what's a Clock—— What Song, What Lampoon, What Satyr, Or what Play, in ſhort, can pleaſe the Town, but what is Coyn'd in your Mint? I can go no where, but like Air, you are ſtill to be found. From *Wapping* to *Tuttleſields*, from *Southwark* to *Shareditch*, you fill the Nations mouth. The trudging Carman whiſtles your harmonious Poetry to his Horſe, the Glaſs Coach Beau whiſpers them to his as ſenceleſs Nymph, the grumbling *Jacobite* mutters them in Corners to his Abdicated Brethren, the Coffee-houſe Bard,

Bard, his Nose Studded with Spectacles, pores over your *Comical Remarks*, as much as on the no less divertive *Observator*. Your Ballads, when I fall asleep, from the Street, in a high Base and a low Treble, [illegible] me a good rest when I can catch it. The Cookmaid and Scullion listen to them, and the very Coachmen ingratiates himself to the antiquated Chamber-maid with them. They will not escape the quiet Nursery, for there they Rock *Baby* asleep. In *Guild-Hall*, some of the *Anti-New Raparees* exalt them up to the very Hustins, and from the Philistine *Goliah*, now make you their third *Giant*. I see them on every Post, and shoals of them at every Booksellers, and must for a while have abdicated the Play-house, had I not as much Complaisance for them as I have had for some of the foregoing Comical Entertainments.

Stutter. Sir, I hope you make that difference between their Plays and mine, which the success of the one and the other claim: My Play may live to bear the charge of theirs, and clear a brace of 1000 *l.* to the House.

Smith. Oh, Sir, I never judge of things by their success, *The Emperour of the Moon*, and other trifles, could brag of that if it were allowable.

Stutter. What, Sir, compare my Play to *The Emperour of the Moon*, when it makes the Lawrel shake on one's head, and another despair of it again———

Smith. If one of the two you mean despairs of the Lawrel, 'tis what can't be help'd, but if it shake on the others Head, I believe 'tis when he laughs at some mens presumptions, tho' I'm no Mans Champion, win it and wear it, *Tom*, when you have writ as many good Plays as they, and your *Tory* ones are forgot; perhaps you may be in a better way—tho' by the way I'd advise you to write no more——

Stutter. How, Sir, write no more! What ca—ca—can you mean by this?——speak——Zoons———

Smith. Oh, Sir, if you are so furious, speak by your self.

Johnson. Prithee, *Tom*, hear him, he's no Foe to you, and to my knowledge brought a good party to clap swingingly on your first day; which, by the way, was no small advantage to the Play.

Stutter.

Stutter. Oh, Sir, I had a powerful party against me, tho' I would not give a farthing for a Play that cannot stem the tide of a Faction; but what can be your reasons, Mr. *Smith*, for my leaving off Writing?——

Smith. Why, Sir, in the first place; like the Sun, to which you compar'd your self just now, this must be your Meridian, and when things are at their highest, the next step is to decline. To deal more plainly with you, the Town deserves not to be oblig'd by you, tho' you could soar higher than Mr. *Phœbus* himself. I remember that in your Dedication to the *Fond Husband*, you assure your Patron *it is your Own, tho' some are pleas'd to doubt the contrary*; and it grieves me to tell you, Mr. *Stutter*, they cannot think this last yours neither, but rather that it was given you by some Person of Quality, who more modest yet than *Virgil*, let's you enjoy the Honour and Profit of it, without issuing out a *Sic nos non Vobis*.

Stutter. Not mine! Then, Sir, let me tell you, I have friends that know better, and I challenge any of the Criticks, tho' my constant and inveterate Enemies, to tell me of one single thing in the *Plot*, or Conversation of it, but what is Genuine, my own, and no Mans else. As for *Plot*, Sir, I'll not yield it to any Poet or Politician; and there's my *Plotting Sisters* for one, which I'll match with any Play in *Europe*: Either *She wou'd if she cou'd*, *Squire of Alsatia*, *Soldiers Fortune*; or any other——

Smith. So you may indeed, the putting out of Candles, changing of Gowns; Tables and Traps are well enough imagin'd.

Stutter. Well enough——ay, and so they are; but pray what do they say besides?——Let me know all.

Smith. I will——They say that most of what takes in your new Play, is gay Farce, the rest is sad, whining, heavy Love; the one too brisk, the other too dull, and both in Extreams. Some say, that like the *Italian* Painter, who kill'd his friend the better to draw the Agonies of a dying Man, you have sacrific'd your Hospitable Acquaintance at the Boarding-Schools, to the improving the Characters of your Play.

Stutter. Indeed, I have some Acquaintance there, but they may rather than complain, thank me for not exposing them more——I could have made the thing look with a worse face.

Smith. That is——thoſe whom you have lam'd, of a Leg or an Arm, may thank you for not killing them quite; but to go on, they ſay the beſt of the Plot is ſtolen.

Stutter. I ſteal a Plot——give me patience——

Smith. Out of a Play of Mrs. *Behns*, call'd *The City Heireſs*; that the humour and diſcourſe between *Jilt-all* and *Amorous*, are much the ſame as between *Wilding*, and *Diana* his kept Miſtreſs, whom he tells his Unkle is an *Heireſs*, to get Money of him, when afterwards ſhe, like your *Jilt*, proving falſe to *Wilding*, marrys his Unkle, who finds himſelf at laſt cheated with a *Whore* inſtead of an *Heireſs*.

Johnſon. Pray, Mr. *Stutter*, is not this ſomething like your Plot?

Stutter. Zooncs, 'tis much like it, I muſt confeſs, but Wits jump——I vow I had forgot it, but it doth not ſignify a ruſh, the Town has forgot that long ago. (*aſide.*) Pray Heaven ſome other malicious prying Book-monger may'nt find it out——Beſides, 'twill never be acted again, 'twas one of the Tory Plays, which won't do now the tide's turn'd.

Smith. No more than your *Royaliſt*, *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, and the reſt of your Court Plays, where *Paſſive Obedience* and *Jus Divinum*, are aſſerted as Infallible Doctrines, and all Sins venial but deſire of Liberty.

Johnſon. Oh don't blame the *Royaliſt*, if it were but for the ſake of that Devout Gentleman, who duly every morning came to Worſhip the *Royal Oak*, with as much Devotion as the Pilgrims at *Loretto*.

Stutter. For Gods ſake, Gentlemen, no more of it, they were little things writ, and ſuitable with the times, which I and my Brothers may be ſomewhat aſham'd of in theſe——

Smith. I believe 'tis that throws you as much upon the extreams, as if nothing could attone but the Counterpart, witneſs the *Lady Addleplot*, which tho her part is ſo ſhort that it is hardly worth the dreſſing him that acts it, claws it off ſo ſmartly, that it put ſome in mind of your Renegadoes, who ever prove ſeverer Task-maſters, than your natural Muſſelmen, and the worſe *Turks* of the two——

Stutter.

Stutter. Well, let 'em take it among them that think themselves concern'd; as for my new Play, I'm sure 'tis good, and bar this thing in the *City Heiress*, which by the by, I would pray you to keep to your selves, 'tis all my own, and like the File, it may defy the Teeth of the Criticizing Snakes; they may hiss and bite, but like true Steel, 'twill wear out their Tongues and Teeth: I am sure they cannot have the Impudence to say otherwise.

Smith. Oh but they have, Mr. *Stutter*, they are even so impudent as to say——

Stutter. Wh——wh——why what the Devil can they say?

Smith. They say that *the Kid-napping of the Heiress to the East-Indies* in your Play, looks very much like some such thing in *Sir Hercules Buffoon*, that your *Sir Rowland Rakehell* hath the Knavery of *Selden*, with the humour and profaneness of Sir *Hercules*; and your *Ramps* are like *Innocentia*, one of the *Heiresses* there. And that the List which the Lady *Addleplot* reads of their party, is the same thing almost with that which the *Irish* Priest reads in the *Amorous Bigott*, and though the words are somewhat different, the humour is the same.

Johnson. What! more discoveries: What say you to this, little *Stutter*, Guilty or not Guilty?

Stutter. Why, Sir, in the first place, I say I never took a hint from any man; in the next, that those Characters you mention'd are like mine, I utterly deny——

Johnson aside. With the confidence of an Actor, the sincerity of a Poet, and the truth of an *Irish* Evidence.

Stutter. Faces you know may be alike, but for all that they are not the same; what has *Sir Rowland* to do with *Sir Hercules*? Or my *Ramps* with his *Ramps*?——Besides their Dress, and the main drift of the Action, is quite another thing.

Smith. That may be, and yet the Character may be borrowed, for in Humours and Characters, it happens as with those *German* Pictures, where a Man or a Woman are drawn so, that a dozen different dresses painted on Izing-glass may suit to the same face; and so it may be said the humour is still the same, tho you dress it another way; it hath the same looks tho' it be disguis'd; as your *French* man is, for though you have made

him

him a Jacobite *French* man, yet he is but a *French* man ſtill, and ſuch a *French* man as no Bean will ever be fond of aping; ſo that after ſo many excellent Maſters from whom you've drawn your Copy, and who have tired their Pens, and then the Town on that ſubject, 'tis to be admired you have not drawn him better; and as for crying up his King, we had enough of that in *Bury-Fair*. Indeed the merry (not to ſay the unthinking) part of the Audience were well pleas'd with him, and always will; the enmity between the Nations giving a reliſh to the Part, even in *Bartholomew-Fair*, tho had he, who acted the part like a good Fiddle, been well tun'd, he would have made better Muſick.

Stutter. Sure the Town will not be ſo barbarous as to deny me the drawing a *French* man right——

Johnſon. 'Twere hard they ſhould; I have heard you ſay your Father was one. Though I've heard a friend of mine ſay, you ſpeak *French* worſe than your *French*-man *Engliſh*.

Smith. aſide. No wonder then if he ſings and ſaunters about ſo much, dreſſes like them, and talks as much. Let me ſee, he hath a *French* Face, lean and dun: all the true Caſt. Hark you, little *Stutter*, did not you draw it for your ſelf? Come, confeſs amongſt friends——

Stutter. Zoons——ca——ca——ca——can any man have patience to hear all this? Gentlemen, here's my Club——

Johnſon. Pox, don't be angry *Tom*, he's but in jeſt. Come, here's t'ye, ſome of you Writers are as high after your third days, *as your Whores with ſettlements*, as you ſaid. Dear *Stutter*, prithee let's be merry; put up your Money, we know you have ſome——Why! there's no arguing with you, your Wit runs out in a paſſion like Bottle Ale in the Dog days.

Stutter. 'Sblood! 'twould make even patience mad. But come, Sir, you that are ſo critical; can you make any more objections?

Smith. Not a word, Sir; I hate a noiſe, and regard your health and mine: tho let me tell you, that thoſe who refuſe to hear of their faults, will remain in them, and be Company only for fools and flatterers; If they be real to know them is a means to mend, and if they be not, our ſober arguing may undeceive thoſe who before thought us in an Error.

Stutter.

Stutter. There you are right, but to have the honour of inventing my Characters and Humours taken from me, is such a thing, as I am sure no author can bear; the name of Plagiary is more odious to me than that of Whore to a virtuous Woman, or the imputation of Cowardise to a Man of Honour.

Johnson. Ay, and the taking your Plots and Humours from you, a greater grief than the ravishing from a kind Mother her dear beloved Daughter; tho' I confess, some people said that your *Nicompoop* is just the very Image of *Bisket* in *Epsom-Wells*, who is a quiet humble civil City Cuckold, govern'd and beaten by his Wife, whom he very much fears, loves, and is proud of: She too calls him *Nicompoop* and fumbler: he courts her Gallant to go to her, begs leave to go play at Bowls, gets fuddled, and is alike reprimanded; so that they said, you may well brag in your Epilogue that your *Cuckolds Character is not ill drawn*, when you had so good an Original to copy after. But I believe 'tis not so.

Stutter. Some Criticks have no mercy; because they cannot take from me the humours between my dear *Granadeer* and his Son, What does one of them behind the Scenes t'other day, but say 'tis Foreign from the main action, and hath no more dependance on it, than the Scene between *Prince Prettiman* and *Tom Thimble* in the *Rehearsal* hath to the *Two Kings of Brentford*. And in short that I might as well have given him a Mother and have a dozen Children, and a Father to the French-man, and to *Amorous*, and to every one of them, and have made as many more Walks, or Plays in a Play, as there are Acts and Scenes in this.——

Johnson. Why 'faith that was unkind, they had as good say that Topknots and Cravat-strings are not necessary garniture.—

Smith. For my part I judge them to be no more necessary than Shoulder-knots and Feathers, of which Fantastick mode, Heaven be praised, the Town is reformed; and I wish those unuseful digressions on our Stage, like overgrown branches, were lop'd off too.

Johnson. Then you may cut off half the Plays of some of our Authors, much fuller of digressions, indeed, then some of our modern Rhetorical Sermons. Come, *Bays* was not so much out when he said, What's your Plot but to bring in fine things. Let your lean, envious Student, who like the Architect will have a rule

to work by, and go by the Compaſs and Plummet, ſhow us a better Play of his own if he can; here, my little Friend, here's to thee, and a good ſucceſs to thy next.

Stutter. Now I vow you're obliging.

Johnſon. And ſo you'll be, dear *Stutter*, if you'll give us a Song.

Stutter. I vow to gad I can't ſing; your Friend here, Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, hath put me ſo out of order.——

Smith. 'Prithee, Mr. *Stutter*, take what I told you the right way, you would not be flattered, would you? but prithee a Song.——

Stutter. Oh Sir, Incenſe is odious to me; beſides I deſerve none.

Smith. Come, come, we know what you deſerve, now you are unjuſt and wrong your ſelf, but pray take no notice of what I ſaid, 'twas only *à luſus verborum.* I love arguing to my heart.

Johnſon. Ay, ſometimes he and I will argue it for an hour or two.

Smith. Wits diſputing, like knives, grind and ſharpen one anothers edge.

Stutter. A very quaint ſimile.——*Aſide*—And that ſhall be my own. You have a World of them Mr. *Smith*, for my part I don't overload my Plays with Wit: Plot and Humour are my Provinces. Tho I think they have been worſe uſed by ill Pens, than *Hungary* by the *Tartars.*

Smith. 'Tis pitty they have been ſo depopulated: But prithee give us a Song.

Stutter. Indeed I cannot now: a Man cannot ſing at all times. *Reads.* My anſwer to my Brother *Horace*'s *omnibus hoc vitium, And that which Tunes the Cobler Tunes us all.*

Smith. What tunes the Cobler?——

Stutter. Why, a merry Heart.

Johnſon. Well, prithee let the Cobler alone, and give us a Song:

Stutter. Stay, I'll begin it all, there is not above 100 verſes, I have it by Heart, 'tis my darling,——

If this ſtrange Vice in all good Singers were

Smith. For God's ſake a Song.——

Stutter. Well, I'll skip ſome——

I ſoon

I soon perceiv'd when I his version met,
'Twas more from prejudice than judgment writ.

—*Aside*—I perceive too by your own confession, that you make use of his version to converse with him.

Johnson. Gad I will side to your Brother *Horace* if you don't sing presently.

Stutter. Well, but hear my verses first.

Smith. We have read them, and will have a Song first.

Stutter. But my Verses———

Johnson. We'll hear 50 of your Verses for every Song you'll Sing us; that's very fair.

Stutter. No——that's too little; I have a new Poem to desire your advice in, you are men of Wit; but I'll have 150 Verses for every Song.

Smith. I vow that's too hard, you have no conscience; but pass for threescore.

Stutter. Have you seen an Ode I translated from the *Greek* of *Anacreon* in my last collection?

Johnson. No; but pray let us have a *Scotch* Song, dear *Tom*, I know thou art a Devil at them.

Stutter. Oh, Sir, I will not thank the Town for giving me the preheminence over all my Contempo——po——po——raries in Lyricks; envy it self will give me that, tho' 'tis a Talent even *Horace* the great Lyrick Poet wanted, or I am mistaken.

Smith. Pray Mr. *Stutter*, seeing you understand *Greek*, which by the way I am glad of, for your sake, the unkind Town saying you do not understand *Latin*, oblige me to explain this passage in *Euripides*:

Ὦ Πότνια Λήθη τῶν κακῶν ὡς εἶ σοφὴ
Καὶ———

Stutter. Let me see the Book Sir——Pox of this Heathen *Greek*, it hath not the *Latin* on the other side, tho' if it had 'twould be much one to me. [*To himself.*

Smith. Well, how do you render that in *English*?

Stutter. Why? I thought you were for a *Scotch* Song—and I have—*fa la la la.*

Smith. But the *Greek* Verse first. (*aside.*) I'll confound him.

Stutter. What do you make of it, let's see?

Smith.

Smith. I do not understand it very well, it talks of *Lethe*, Oblivion.

Stutter, Gad, so it may, and I believe I have drank of *Lethe's* Lake, for I have quite forgot it. Pox of this *Greek*, 'tis only fit for Pedants, and as unbecoming a Gentleman as Pedlars French.

Smith. You mistake sure, Mr. *Stutter*: *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, *Aristophanes*, and the other *Greek* Authors, were ever esteem'd the Fountains of Dramatick Poetry.

Stutter. For my part, I neither mind them nor *Aristotle*, or *Longinus*, my dear *Horace* doth my business.

Smith apart. For which you may thank the Translators.

Stutter. Tho understand him and his Rules, and follow them never so strict, you may miss the way to please the Town, and your Play be hiss'd off by the Criticks, for all your Rules, I'faith. For my part, I am of *Terence's* mind, since 'tis our business to please the Court and Town, and have a large Audience. Let's write so as to please them and the Major party. That hath been my Rule, and I have found it successful, and I'll not leave it for all the Musty Ancients, till I find one more profitable. But you shall have a Song.

Johnson. Had it not been to be rid of this *Greek*, he would not have Sung this hour.

Stutter. I reckon I have made some 7953 Songs, 2250 Ballads, and 1956 Catches, besides Madrigals, Odes, and other Lyrick Copies of Verses *ad infinitum*. Are you for a new one? I seldom am a day without making one or two.

Johnson. What you like best your self, *Tom*, good Songs are ever new to me.

Stutter. *Abroad as I was walking upon a Summers day,*
There I met with a Beggar Woman cloathed all in Gray:
Her Clothes they were so torn, you might have seen her skin,
She was the first that taught me to see the Golin,
Ah! see the Golin my Jo, *see the Golin.*

17th page of *Trick for Trick.* *She took her Bearn up, and wrapt it weel in Clothes,*
And then she takes a Golin and stick between her Toes,
And ever as the Lurden cry'd or made any din,

She shook her foot and cry'd my Jo, *see the Golin*;
Ah! see the Golin my Jo, *see the Golin.*

Smith. A very pretty Tune indeed.

Stutter. But how do you like the words? To praise the Tune only, is commending a frame, and saying nothing of the picture.

Johnson. Oh the words are singular; odd—odd, mighty pretty odd words.

Stutter. Ay, that *see the Golin, my* Jo, *see the Golin*: Gad, I wonder how I come by all these pretty things: I have a world of them.

Johnson. Who but your self would have had such a pretty thought, *my* Jo, *see the Golin?*

Stutter. Ay, that *Golin*, it seems there's nothing in it.

Johnson. Oh, but you are mistaken, 'tis worth a whole Epick Poem.

Stutter. That *Golin*—Sir, you do me honour; tho let me tell you, I had rather be the Author of that *Golin* than of *Absalom* and *Achitophel.*

Johnson. So had I, tho I look upon it as the best Poem we have had these 20 years.

Stutter. Oh! I perceive you have not read mine on a late Duke's going to *America*; I'll read it to you, 'tis not above 300 lines.

Johnson. 'Sdeath, he is at again—*aside.*—Prithee first let me admire that Ring on thy finger, if it be right 'tis worth 50 pounds. Ah, Rogue, I never saw you wear it before to day, nor that fine Watch; why those are substantial moveables.

Smith apart. Yes, and may pawn for half their cost in the long Vacation. Why friend, you have laid out half your third day on that, I believe you have a mind like *Bias*, one of the Sages of *Greece*, to say upon occasion, *Omnia Mecum Porto.*

Stutter apart. Now would I give any thing to know his meaning.

Smith apart. He is angry, I'll turn it off, perhaps he doth not understand it. I would say, you carry all good things along with you.

Johnson. Prithee let him display his Jewels and be fine. [*to Smith.*

'twill make him the more ridiculous; what if like Monſieur *Ragou*, he hath a mind to lay out his whole ſtock in Ribonds? Indeed, 'tis a lovely Ring, dear *Stutter*, let me ſee it.

Stuttter. A Tribute to the Muſes; the grateful Offering of a kind admirer of my Works.

Johnſon. I'll ſay that for *Tom*, that tho ſome of the Men look upon him by the wrong end of the proſpect, and the Criticks for his Satyrs would uſe him worſe than his Eldeſt Brother *Orpheus* was by the Women, yet the kinder Sex take a truer view of his merits. And tho *Dragon* grows old, yet he keeps up among them, a Song for *Cinthia*, another for *Cloe*, are worth Jewels and Gold, and many times better things.

Smith. That's a pretty Trade, I muſt confeſs, and much like the Barters with the *Indians*, an exchange of Toys for pretious Stones.

Stutter. By your leave, I reckon my Toys as good as theirs, and if I receive their pretious Stones, I ſeldom fail to return the gratitude in the ſame kind.

Johnſon. Ah, Wag! there thou'rt before *Bays* for a dry Bob, and I can but admire how ingeniouſly they are ſpread in thy Play; ſome of them are Maſter-ſtrokes of that kind, for that and good honeſt Atheiſtical Songs, andabuſing the Black-coat as thou call'ſt it, thou bear'ſt away the Lawrel.

Stutter. Oh, I am for things that are out of the way, and you ſhall no more ſee any thing of mine without ſomething in't, that's ſtinging or odd; than a Sermon without Quotations, a Tragedy without Bombaſt, and an Almanack without Lyes.

Johnſon. Nay, I'll ſay that for thee, that tho ſome envious Wits ſay thou'rt a Drone, thou art as Waſpiſh as the beſt of them, and if they cannot perceive thy Wit, 'tis becauſe 'tis ſo very fine, that 'tis very hard to be ſeen, tho I ſhould eſteem it as much the more for being ſo, as a Machine in an Opera for moving with a ſubtle Wire.

Stutter. Now you talk of Ladies, let's have their Health; the little Rogues are ſo fond of me.

Johnſon. Why do you not ſecure ſome one of them, though it were but a Lady Dowager, her Jointure would be better than a Patrimony on *Parnaſſus*.

Stutter.

Stutter. Oh, I love to live at large, and the pleasure of the Chase many times exceeds that of the Quarry; besides, I vow, I can never talk of for better for worse, but they desire me to Sing t'other Song. Gad, I believe they are afraid 'twould spoil my Voice, and that the Town should lose the benefit of my Writing; and they use me as your Lords do their old Servants, whom they never prefer, for fear of losing their good Service. Besides, I have always kept too many Irons at work, and like a Greyhound coursing two Hares at once, I have had always the ill luck to miss both——but I intend to pursue close some one of them, I have half a dozen in my eye, and one of them will do, *fa la la fa la.*

Smith. I'll say that for him, he is as fond of talking of them, ——*aside*——as of his last Song, or Copy of Verses. Prithee sing tother Song.

Stutter. Make your Honours Miss, Tholl——loll——loll.
Now to me Child——

Smith. Oh, prithee *Tom*, let's have another, I heard the Ballad-singers at it in the Streets already.

Stutter. A Man would almost forswear making any thing publick, that Rascally Tribe Invades it presently, and murders it as much as a bad *Irish* Actor a good part. I think my Songs are like my Mistresses, fated when they go from me to be common, but I'll have an Action against him who Printed that without my leave.

Smith. Thy leave *Tom*? Why, I have heard the Tune, and most of the Words, these two years; my Dancing Master told me who first made them, but I have forgot it.

Stutter. Well, who ever made that Whim first, if he can Dance no better than he Writes, he shall never cut a good Caper: I am sure I added and alter'd much, besides the relish at the end of each Stanza, and then few people know it. But how did you like my Letter with the Loaf and Butter, was not that pretty? Ah ah ah.

Smith. Ay, very pretty, 'thas made me laugh twenty years ago at School, tho I must confess, you have improved it as much as *Bussy Dambois* by your late *alterations and amendments.*

Stuter. Ay, what a wretched thing it was before I mended it;

'tis

'tis pity Tragedy doth not take in this Age, or else 'twould overtop your *All for Love*, *Oedipus*, &c. But how did you like the humour of the Dance of Spirits?

Smith. Oh, 'twas very necessary to inform the Audience of the Pistolling *Bully*; I perceive you are not in that of Mr. *Bays*'s Opinion, tho you love to elevate, your flare to surprize.

Stutter. What think you of the Comical part of the Play? That was all my own, I assure you.

Johnson. I believe so; 'tis as diverting and natural as any thing you ever writ, principally the Fencing Masters with the Bedstaffs: All that's good in the Play must be yours, and what's bad *Chapmans*.

Stutter. Ay, I think the Comical part is very well brought in, and much to the purpose, tho I ask'd one his Opinion of it, and the ignorant fool told me 'twas pretty Farce: Ah ah ah.

Smith. But pray, what did you bring the Fencing Master and the Steward upon the Stage for? ——

Stutter. Why to talk together and fence, what should I bring them there for else?

Smith. I do not perceive your drift in it, for they never appear afterwards; and I think a Scene between Monsieur and *Dambois*, about the killing the King his brother, well wrought, and some others to prepare the events which are brought in abruptly, and to avoid dull Narrations had been more to the purpose; it makes those that are Judges say, that were it not for Mr. *M——fords* excellent acting, which is the Soul of the Play, it would have been still-born. And to speak in your style, *it now hath a World of spots*, and could have been *a World without spots*, and have had nothing to do with *Heavens strait Axle-tree*, and the World of Fustian you have either made or left in it. I have heard of the World turn'd into *a withdrawing Room*, but never till now of Heaven made a Coach with its Axle-tree. Some Criticks are as angry with you for that, as the Dissenters with Queen *Bess*, for the Relicks of Ceremonies.

Stutter. Being in haste, I overlookt some of the old stuff, and could not well avoid it, for had I taken it all out, there had remained nothing old in the Play but the Name, and I had done like the fellow who bought him a new outside to his Lining, and

a new

a new Lining to his outside; tho I as much hate to wear an Authors old Socks, as to ſing anothers words, a fault you'll ſeldom find me guilty of. There is a great deal of Art in altering a Play for the better, and you may almoſt as ſoon make an old face look young again; but I think no old Author ever ſuffer'd much under my hands.

Johnſon. But the Audience did—*aſide*—Oh, no: one would think you had bath'd them in that Fountain which turns decrepit Age to ſprightly Youth: for when they have been as it were Bedridden, and confin'd in Cloſets to the Dead Letter half an Age, you bring them on the Stage Singing and Dancing like mad; and like you, as full of Bell Air, and as ſpruce, as if they were juſt ſhot out of a Bow from *Paris*, and ſo Rhetorical, that in a ſeries of Complemental Phraſes, *Verborum Ambagibus*, we are loſt in amazement, before we can reach the middle of your Periods; you have found out the Tranſfuſion of Wit and Style, I think, better than the Phyſicians have done that of the blood.

Stutter. Oh! thoſe things coſt me nothing, my Genius lyes that way, but the Toyl lyes in Teaching the Actors, in Martialling them right, and bringing them on; 'tis a ſad drudgery, one muſt as it were clap them on the back, and ſpit in their mouths, to incourage them, tho they are marring a good thing, and murthering a Part: I Teach them like Parrots, tho to deal plainly with you, I am affraid ſome of them moſt ungratefully, laugh at me behind my back, and are ſo us'd to counterfeit upon the Stage, that they can no more leave it off when they are from it, than an *Iriſhman* his Accent, a thorough-pac'd ſwearer his Oaths, and your Yea and Nay Quaking Friend, his Cant and Formality. I believe 'tis they have poſſeſs'd the Town with the Report of my want of Wit; they Interlope in our Trade as you know. Now ſhould I ſpeak any witty thing to them, it may be, as they have good memories, they would at Night ſet it down to deck their Plays, or treat every company they come into with it, and ſo make any fine thing common preſently, and unfit to be us'd by me when I have company that deſerves it; for, like a hidden ſtore, I reſerve them for my friends, and always one finer than all the reſt at parting, like a Grace-cup, to leave a good reliſh of my ſenſe when I am gone,

as I obſerve that a good round Jeſt at the end of a Scene, commands a Clap. Indeed, thoſe things, like Coronation Robes, are more for ſtate than uſe, and muſt not be worn thredbare——

Johnſon. So that ſometimes, my friend, you take as much pains to hide your VVit, as you do at others to ſhow it.

Stutter. And with good reaſon too, when I am with the Players. Gad, tho it were but before the Candle-ſnuffer, I dare not utter one good word—who can tell but he hath a Play upon the ſtocks, and ready to be Launch'd next Term.

Johnſon. Come, ſay no more of it, I am ſure they have done you a great deal of Juſtice, and I know ſome of them that deſerve your eſteem; you muſt do like that King who would not remember the wrongs done him when a Duke. And ſo the Author of *Love for Money*, muſt forget the dejected and wrong'd Duke of *Dunſtable.*

Smith. But pray, by the by, why from one Gentleman of *Fletcher's*, did you make three Dukes? Methinks it ſeem'd too great an Impoſition on the ſenſe of the Audience.

Johnſon. VVhy? *Bays* gave you two Kings of *Brentford*, and three Dukes, I think, was more ſurprizing.

Stutter. I thank you, Mr. *Johnſon*, for hitting my true meaning; that was a good Play! but thoſe Scenes of *Baſſet*, which gave offence to a very great Lady, were the Ruine of it, tho nothing could be prettier. And that with a great deal more, is my own: but now that Lady is gone, I will have it revived before I oblige the Stage with another Play.

Johnſon. So you may, as well as *Buſſy Dambois*, and with as much Juſtice have the *Banditti* too; I believe the one will take as much as t'other.

Stutter. Now you make me ſigh when you ſpeak of the *Banditti*, that poor Play fell a ſacrifice to the Criticks, they envy me becauſe I think my ſelf as good as they, as in reaſon I am, and perhaps better too. They Martyrized my Play to pull down my Reputation, which began to eclipſe that of the moſt Celebrated Dramatick Authors; but I think I fitted them in my Epiſtle Dedicatory to the Foreman of my Partial Jury, *Sir Critick Cat-call*; you have read it without doubt.

Johnſon. Ay, ay, you puzzled them I'm ſure, with your *Viſible*

and

and *Invisible Patrons*, and gave them three or four sheets of Compliments and VVitticisms they could not understand, nor have the the patience to read, without taking Snuff.

Stutter. They had better ne'r have meddled with me, I stung them to the quick, and had I had no more Wit than they, I had had more Duels to fight than any desperate Bravo, or quarrelsome Gamester, e're fought or bragg'd of in their Lives.

Johnson. How did you put them off then?

Stutter. Very easily I'faith: I told them that if Fighting was their Province, Writing was mine. That I invaded no mens proprieties, but if they would attack me at my own Weapon, I was ready to give them the satisfaction of an Author, draw my Pen in the Quarrel, and give them dash for dash, but that I had too great a veneration for the Ladies, to endanger any thing they were pleas'd to set a value on. And in short, at any thing else I begg'd their pardon, and was their humble servant——And this, with abdicating the Coffee-house, and exchanging their Company, for the Society of the more sober and tractable Gentlemen of the Country and City, quasht the business. Tho now I dare appear; and tho a Star of the first magnitude shines so bright among you, that even in its eclipse I fear'd before, 'twould shine brighter than I. Now I think my Boarding-School may make as great a blaze as his *Spanish* Frier.

Smith. Have a care young *Phaeton*, Comets may blaze a while, as you, after a Famous Author have observed, but the unctious matter being spent, they must return to their first obscurity.

Stutter. My stock will blaze when others snuffs are out; a Rising Star is worth two setting Suns: And now that in the style of my *Siege of* Memphis, *opportunity reaches forth her silver hairs and bids me hold.*

By dint of merit, I'll the Lawrel snatch;
I'll not for it's reversion tamely Watch,
It's fading green I'll instantly revive,
Drones shall not eat the Honey of the Hive:
To Court I'll hye, and claim it as my due,
Outdo them all; nay, even my self outdo:
I'll Write and Sing, and Write, till it will do.

Nay, rather than I'll leave my Cause i'th' Lurch, I'll—I'll—I'll—
[*Scratches his Head.*] *Smith.*

Smith. Fast, seem Godly, Pray, and go to *Church*—— the Rhyme will be left in the lurch else. This was a smart fit of Rhyming if it had but held out; I see you have your Poetical Concordance in your head pretty ready. Prithee what Rhimes to *Jehovah*, Chimny, Month, or to Scurvy?

Stutter. Scurvy——humph——Scurvy——Stay——Pox, that's a Scurvy Rhime, and a Scurvy question now: The nearest to it, is a very good friend of mines Name, that begins with a *D*——

Smith. Who is a Scurvy Rhymer.——*aside.*

Stutter. But waving that; I'll not be afraid of old worn-out Rivals, *Impavidum ferient ruinæ*, as I remember Monsieur *Lavardin* said of his Holiness Pope *Innocent* XI. in whose praise I writ a Poem. A pox on't, you have put me out, and spoil'd my Rapture.

Smith. He hath his bits of *Latin* as ready as a *Spanish* Monk his Breviary, tho neither of them understand a word on't but by Translations. [*Aside.*

Johnson. Well, go on and prosper, *Tom*, you would be sure of success, were we ruled by Laws such as those of the Kingdom of the Moon; which, by the way, I think as well imagined as those of Sir *Tho. Moore's* Utopia. They say that there old men honour and serve the young, as being in body and mind fitter for the service of their Country. 'Gad, I believe you had fared very well in that World, their Language being all Musick, and their Money all Verse.

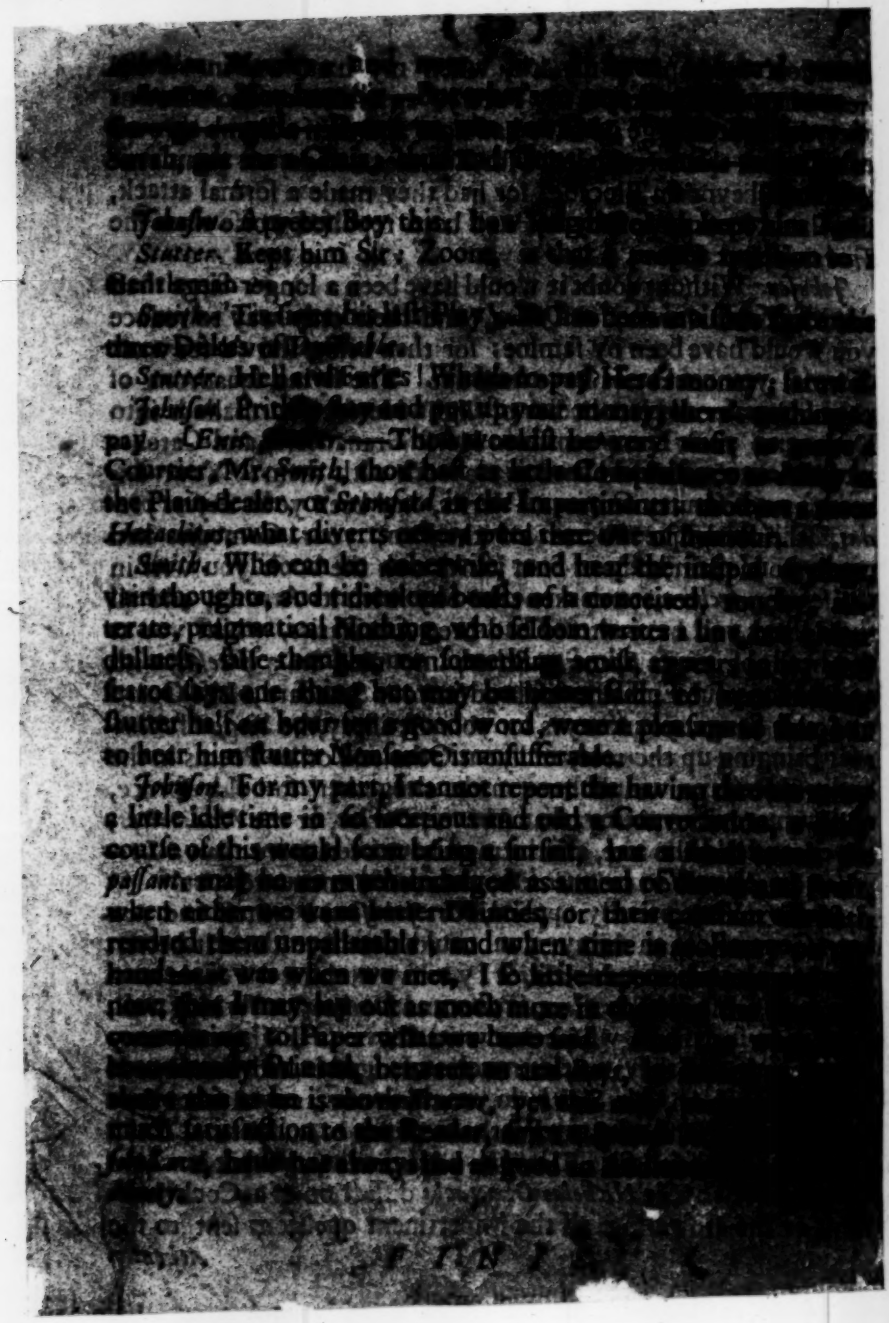
Smith. But the Musick must be good, and the Verse bear the Hall-mark, for like the late Brass *Irish* Coyn, it does not go for what Fools may take it, but for its real value; and one Stanza of *Spencer's* there, may outweigh a whole *Quarles*, or a Verse of *Hudibras*, a Cart-load of his *Ghosts*.

Stutter. Sir, I have grafted of twig upon him, which I have called his *Ghost*, and for all your opinion, I believe that if any man hath come to his heighth, 'tis I have done it; no Author ever exploded my Works, nor writ against them so as to come to particulars, which is no small pride and comfort to me, since the most celebrated Pens have been often carp'd at, and examin'd, even in the best of their Works; and Indictments of Poetical Thefts, Murders and Treasons drawn against them. No man was ever yet so bold as to answer me, so that sometimes I have

been

been forced to answer my self, when my hand was in. I believe they have look'd on my Poetry, as Armies on those Towns they dare not Besiege; I have had now and then a Bomb thrown at me, but tho surrounded with Enemies, none of them ever presumed beyond a Blocade, for had they made a formal attack, they had certainly lost by it, and been repulsed worse than the *Turks* were at *Vienna*.

Johnson: Without doubt it would have been a longer Siege than that of *Troy*, *Candia*, or *Ostend*, and their only way to reduce you would have been by famine; for then being starv'd for want of sense, you could not have held out. The flying squadrons of your Songs form'd into bodies of light Horse, your Ballads into Dragoons, your Lampoons into Horse Granadeers, and Catches into Volonteers, would have made work with them: Your Libertine and smutty Copies of Verses, had been your *Enfans perdus*, the Burlesque Poems led the Van, your Comedies had made your main body of Foot join'd with the book you writ in praise of *Archers*, to darken the Sky with its Arrows, and all those Plays you have altered had been Auxiliaries, whilst you at the head of your *Boarding-School*, mounted on a *Weesil*, with an *Owl* for your Emblem display'd in your Standard, a Life Guard of *Scotch* Songs, your Satyrs for your Artillery, the Siege of *Memphis* bringing up the rear, and your Odes and other Poems in the body of Reserve, would have made altogether so bold, spruce, and numerous an Army, that *Xerxes*, *Darius*, or the *Madianites*, never muster'd the like, and he must have been more than a *Leonidas*, an *Alexander*, or a *Gideon*, that dared encounter you.

Smatter: Very prettily applied, Mr. *Johnson*; I protest had you been General of an Army, you could not have done it better. What think you of it, Mr. *Smith*; you say nothing? People may talk now of Sir *John Suckling*, *Waller* and *Denham*, for Writing well, 'twas easie for them, who never writ above an Eighteen penny book; but had they writ as much as I, 'gad it had been worth speaking of. Ah! Mr. *Smith*, do you think now, any Author dare encounter me, and take my Works to pieces?

Smith. No, faith Sir: *De nihilo nihil dicitur*, I think it would be as needless as Sir *Nicholas Gimcracks* dissection of a Cock Lobster, or the answering all the impertinent questions sent to the